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ABSTRACT

This study explores the variables included on Kentucky's School Report Card used to report information about individual schools to parents, legislators, educators, community leaders, and educational researchers. Data used for this exploratory, descriptive study were obtained through the Kentucky Department of Education Web site. The study focused on the School Report Cards for the 10 highest scoring and 10 lowest scoring schools on the Fourth Grade Reading section of the Kentucky Core Content Tests. Examination of these report cards leads to the suggestion that the "pupil-teacher-ratio" variable be replaced by "class size." It is also suggested that teachers' years of experience be reported as median rather than mean values. There are indications in the data of relationships between fourth grade reading scores and attendance rates and the end-of-primary reading scores on the California Tests of Basic Skills/5. Sorting data by the 10 highest and 10 lowest scoring schools on the fourth grade reading tests resulted in the discovery of schools that are rich sites for qualitative follow-up studies and might not have been noted otherwise. The analysis leads to the conclusion that Kentucky's School Report is a very good reporting school that could become excellent. The School Report Card is attached. (Contains 14 references.) (Author/SLD)

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Running head: KENTUCKY'S SCHOOL REPORT CARD

Kentucky's School Report Card and Fourth Grade Reading Scores

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Abstract

This study explores the variables included on Kentucky's School Report Card used to report information about individual schools to parents, legislators, educators, community leaders, and educational researchers. Data used for this exploratory, descriptive study were obtained from through the Kentucky Department of Education Website. The study focused on the School Report Cards for the 10 highest scoring and 10 lowest scoring schools on the 4th Grade Reading section of the 2000 Kentucky Core Content Tests (KCCT). The researcher suggests that the "pupil-teacher-ratio" variable be replaced with an reporting of "class size." It was further suggested that teachers' "years of experience" be reported as median rather than mean values. There were indications in the data of relationships between 4th grade reading scores and attendance rates, and CTBS/5 end of primary reading scores. Sorting the data by the 10 highest and 10 lowest scoring schools on the 4th grade reading tests led to the discovery of schools that would not have been otherwise by other analyses that are rich sites for qualitative follow-up studies. Kentucky's School Report is a very good reporting tool that could become excellent.

Kentucky's School Report Card and Fourth Grade Reading Scores

Throughout the United States, public school districts and states have established accountability systems for the public schools. Districts and states face the continuing challenge of reporting school information in an understandable and useful format. Consumers of these data are parents, legislators, educators, and community leaders. In 1998, Belden Russonello & Stewart; R/S/M; and A-Plus Communications, through a study commissioned by Education Week, found that parents, educators, and taxpayers wanted a mix of quantitative and qualitative data reported. They found that the top of the list of the most useful indicators were: safety, teacher qualifications, test scores, class size, graduate rates, and dropout rates.

Background for Kentucky's School Report Card

Kentucky law KRS 158.6453 (1990, April) section (7) states:

> The Kentucky Board of Education, after the Department of Education has received advice from the Office of Education Accountability; the School Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability Council; and the National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability, shall promulgate an administrative regulation under KRS Chapter 13A to establish the components of a school report card that clearly communicates with parents and the public about school performance. The school report card shall be sent to the parents of the students of the districts, and a summary of the results for the district shall be published in the newspaper with the largest circulation in the county. It shall include, but not be limited to, the following components reported by race, gender, and disability when appropriate:
>
> (a) Student academic achievement, including the results from each of the assessments administered under this section;
> (b) Nonacademic achievement, including the school's attendance, retention, dropout rates, and student transition to adult life; and
> (c) School learning environment, including measures of parental involvement.
>
> **Effective**: April 14, 1998

The Kentucky Department of Education School Report Card Website (Kentucky Department of Education, 2001) describes Kentucky Department of Education's compliance with this regulation:

> The purpose of the School Report Card is to keep parents and community members informed about what is going on in each Kentucky school. It is an opportunity for schools to highlight their strengths and explain what they are doing to improve on any weaknesses. This helps open the lines of communication between the school, the homes of its students, and its local community. This document has a significant and beneficial public impact. The elements of the School Report Card are:
>
> - A School Report Card: A document that is to be sent to the parents or guardians of every student in every school by Jan. 16, 2002.
> - An Expanded School Report Card: Information – above and beyond that in the School Report Card – that each school must have on-hand in the principal's office for anyone who requests it.
> - A District Report Card: A summary of each school's report card to be published in the county's largest circulation newspaper no later than the second Sunday in February, 2002.
> - An Expanded District Report Card: Information-above and beyond that in the District Report Card-that the district must have on-hand in the central office for anyone who requests it.
>
> The format for this publication was developed through an open process that involved 16 parent focus groups, the School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council (SCAAC) and dozens of Kentucky educators.
>
> This is the third year in which Kentucky schools have been required to produce and distribute School Report Cards. The Kentucky Board of Education has formalized an administrative regulation that governs the School Report Card.

The format for Kentucky's School Report Card that is mailed to the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of each student and is available on KDE's website is presented in the Appendix of this paper.

The Purpose of This Study

This exploratory, descriptive research study was designed to examine Kentucky's School Report Card and the information presented through the Report Card. The perspective brought to the study was an interest in the 4th grade reading scores on the Kentucky Core Content Tests (KCCT).

Research Questions

Questions that drove this study were:

1. What information is presented in Kentucky's School Report Card sent to Parents(s)/guardian(s)?
2. Does the information presented the Kentucky School Report Cards for the ten schools with the highest 4th grade reading scores differ from the information presented in the Kentucky School Report Cards of the ten schools with the lowest 4th grade reading scores?
3. Are there indications of relationships between data reported and 4th grade reading scores on the Kentucky Core Content Tests?

Related Literature

There is a growing body of research literature comparing variables presented on states' school report cards and statewide accountability test scores. This body of literature is as recent as the report cards. French and Bobbett (1995) compared commonalities and differences in the report cards of 19 southern and eastern states. They found that 13 states reported scores of statewide accountability tests. However, these states did not report relationships between variables and test scores.

In a study of Texas' high school report cards, Bobbett (1995) found that most categories on the Texas report card had little or no meaningful relationship with student outcomes. However, three variables had positive relationships with test scores. These were (1) attendance, (2) teacher turnover, and (3) percentage of economically disadvantaged students. Sutton and Soderstrom (1999) examined the Illinois School Report Card and found that a public school's score on the Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP) was most closely related to the school's demographic and socioeconomic status.

Miller-Whitehead (2000) compared variables on the 2000 Tennessee School Systems Report Card and found that teacher salary had the most positive relationship with student achievement. System size and percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunches had the highest negative correlations with student achievement scores. It is notable that external researchers found the relationships between variables on states' school report cards and the states' assessment scores. These relationships were not reported by the state departments of education as a part of the information provided to the public.

Method

Data Source

The data for this study were obtained from the Kentucky Department of Education's website (KDE, 2001). The school-level fourth-grade reading scores (N=782) from the 2000 Kentucky Core Content Tests (KCCT) were downloaded and ordered from highest to lowest. The 10 schools with the highest scores and the 10 schools with the lowest scores were selected for the study (Swanson & Engert, 1995). The School Report Cards for each of the 20 schools were printed from the KDE website and data were hand entered into descriptive Tables 1 and 2 for analysis.

Data included in the Kentucky School Report Card.

The Kentucky School Report Card (see Appendix) includes both qualitative and quantitative data. This study focused on the quantitative data. Excluded qualitative data in the School Report Card that were: (1) a description of the school (e.g.. location and history), (2) how the school ensures educational equity, (3) information on school safety procedures, (4) description of extracurricular activities, (5) listing of awards and recognitions, (6) what the school is doing to improve, and (7) names and addresses of school contact personnel and School Based Decision Making Council members.

Kentucky Core Content Tests (KCCT) scores included on the School Report Card are the academic indices for the seven content areas assessed in elementary school: (1) 4th Grade Reading, (2) 4th Grade Science, (3) 4th Grade Writing, (4) 5th Grade Mathematics, (5) 5th Grade Social Studies, (6) 5th Grade Arts and Humanities, and (7) 5th Grade Practical Living and Vocational Studies. These assessments consist of 24 multiple-choice and six open-response questions for each area. Six forms for each content area are used with item matrixed with the school as the unit of analysis. The six forms are used to provide adequate assessment of the state's core curriculum for each content area. There is no overlap in questions among the six forms.

The statewide educational goal in Kentucky is to have students performing at the "proficient" level by 2014. Thus, the percentages of students in the four performance categories (actually, three because the categories of Proficient/Distinguished are collapsed) for each of the assessed content areas are presented. This allows the reader to see what percent of students in the school are reading at the Proficient/Distinguished level in the 4th grade. No total academic index score is given on the School Report Card. However, it is this total score that is used in the

calculation of the school's reward/sanction status (information not included on the School Report Card). The overall academic index score was identified from another source on the KDE website and was added to the data analysis Table 1.

Table 1. Data From The Kentucky School Report Card

School Code Name	Reading Score	Total Academic Index*	Enroll-ment	CTBS/5 End of Primary Reading Percentile	School Attendance Rate	District Attendance Rate	School Retention Rate	Spending per pupil	Student-Teacher Ratio	Student-Computer Ratio	Number of violations reported	#Students whose P/G had at least one teacher conf.	Percent of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch *
THE TEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WITH HIGHEST 4TH GRADE READING SCORES ON KCCT													
High-1	97.7	92.8	695	73rd	96.2%	95.4%	0%	$3,627	18:1	6:1	0	600	03.1%
High-2	97.1	72.3	141	74th	97.8%	94.3%	0%	$4,661	20:1	5.7:1	0	50	34.5%
High-3	96.7	72.5	172	77th	95.9%	95.9%	0%	$4,911	16:1	6:1	0	165	37.7%
High-4	96.0	94.4	286	74th	96.0%	95.4%	0%	$5,467	14:1	6:1	0	286	12.6%
High-5	95.7	69.1	265	49th	93.5%	91.4%	0%	$5,253	13:1	4:1	0	242	87.4%
High-6	95.6	83.8	270	61st	95.2%	92.7%	0%	$4,458	18:1	7.7:1	0	219	64.1%
High-7	95.5	84.6	654	80th	97%	93.2%	0.5%	$4,192	16:1	7:1	0	650	05.8%
High-8	95.5	83.7	363	81st	96%	93.2%	0%	$7,072	15:1	7.5:1	0	347	14.5%
High-9	95.3	86.7	513	69th	95.9%	95.9%	0%	$3,960	18:1	8:1	0	496	30.9%
High-10	95.1	79.0	387	67th	96.8%	95.6%	0%	$4,100	18:1	6:1	0	220	55.6%
THE TEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WITH LOWEST 4TH GRADE READING SCORES ON KCCT													
Low-1	56.8	58.4	126	45th	93.7%	92.9%	0%	$5,562	12:1	3.8:1	0	90	85.6%
Low-2	55.9	36.4	457	21st	93.7%	92.7%	0%	$7,417	14:1	4:1	0	400	92.9%
Low-3	55.8	42.0	388	16th	91.8%	92.7%	0%	$7,129	14:1	3.8:1	0	350	88.9%
Low-4	54.3	39.4	712	29th	92.8%	92.7%	0.9%	$6,102	16:1	5.9:1	0	500	87.4%
Low-5	54.0	42.2	443	33rd	92.2%	92.8%	0.6%	$5,105	18:1	6:1	0	279	86.7%
Low-6	53.6	39.0	298	41st	92.9%	92.7%	4%	$9,312	13:1	3.8:1	2	150	68.5%
Low-7	52.4	42.3	139	24th	95.7%	93.2%	0%	$6,875	14:1	5.1:1	0	110	89.2%
Low-8	51.1	39.2	270	64th	92.7%	91.6%	0%	$5,216	12:1	6:1	0	150	84.8%
Low-9	48.6	38.2	507	29th	93.1%	92.8%	1.1%	$4,052	19:1	5.8:1	0	495	73.7%
Low-10	48.4	33.2	404	26th	92.2%	92.8%	3.3%	$5,596	16:1	5:1	0	180	96.9%
State Averages	76.9			55th	93.9%	93.9%	4%	$6,270	17:1	5.8:1	N/A	N/A	55%

*Note: Information not included in School Report Card

Table 1.

School Code Name: The school names have been replaced with code names.

Reading Score: This is the school's Reading Academic Index on the KCCT. The range for the highest scoring schools was 95.1-97.7. A score of 100 is "Proficient." Upper limit of score is 140. The range of scores for the lowest scoring schools was 48.4-56.8.

Total Academic Index: This is the average of the seven KCCT tests taken by elementary school students. This Total Academic Index is not included on the School Report Card. Range for highest scoring schools was 69.1-94.4; range for lowest scoring schools was 33.2-58.4.

Enrollment: Total number of students enrolled. Range for highest scoring schools was 141-695; range for lowest scoring schools was 126-507.

CTBS/5 End of Primary Reading Percentile: This test, with the individual student as the unit of analysis, is given at the end of third grade in elementary schools. The range of percentile scores for the highest scoring schools on the KCCT Reading was 49^{th}-81^{st}; the range of percentile scores for the lowest scoring schools on the KCCT Reading was 21^{st}-64^{th}.

School Attendance Rate: The range for the highest scoring schools was 93.5%-97.8%; the range for the lowest scoring schools was 91.8%-93.7%. The school average for the state was 93.9%.

District Attendance Rate: The range for the highest scoring schools was 91.40%-95.90%; the range for the lowest scoring schools was 91.80%-95.70%. The school average for the state was 93.9%.

School Retention Rate: The retention rate reports on the percentage of students that were retained, divided by the total number of students in the school. This rage of this rate for the highest scoring schools was 0%-0. 5%; the range for the lowest scoring schools was 0%-4%. The state average retention rate is 4%.

Spending Per Pupil: The range of spending per pupil for the highest scoring schools was $3,627-$7,072; the range for the lowest scoring schools was $4,052-$9,312. The state average was $6,270.

Student-Teacher Ratio: This was calculated using the total number on the teaching staff and the total number of students in the school. This value is not to be confused with the number of students per teacher within the classroom. This is not an indication of class size.

Student-Computer Ratio: This value was calculated using the total number of computers in the school and the total number of students in the school.

Number of Violations Reported: This value used to assess school safety had a value of 0 for all schools.

Number of Students Whose Parent/Guardian Had at Least One Teacher Conference: This value is presented as a frequency (total N) rather than a percentage. While if offers information for individual schools, it does not facilitate comparisons between schools.

Percent of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch: These data are not included in the School Report Card. They are presented here as additional information.

Table 2 below presents a summary of data in Table 1.

Table 2. Summary of Kentucky School Report Card Data from Table 1

School Group	Reading Score	Total Academic Index*	Enroll-ment	CTBS/5 End of Primary Reading Percentile	School Attendance Rate	District Attendance Rate	School Retention Rate	Spending Per Pupil	Percent of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch *
	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median
10 Highest	95.65	83.75	324.5	73rd	96%	95%	0%	$4,511	32.6%
10 Lowest	53.8	39.1	396.0	29th	92.85%	92.75%	0.6%	$5,849	87.05

*Note: Information not included in School Report Card

The median enrollment for the 10 highest scoring schools (324.5) was lower that the median for the 10 lowest scoring schools (396.0). The median scores for the 10 highest scoring schools (73rd percentile) were also higher than the median for the 10 lowest scoring schools (29th percentile). There was also a difference in the median school attendance rates. For the 10 highest scoring schools, the median was 96%; for the 10 lowest scoring schools, the median was 92.85%. A similar difference was found in the median of the scores for the district attendance rate (95%; 92.75% for the 10 highest scoring and 10 lowest scoring respectively. The 10 highest scoring schools had a median retention rate of 0%; the 10 lowest scoring schools had a median retention rate of 0.6%. The median Spending Per Pupil by the 10 highest scoring schools was $4,511; the median Spending Per Pupil for the lowest scoring schools was $5,849. The median for the Percentage of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch was 32.6% for the 10 highest scoring schools and 87.05% for the 10 lowest scoring schools.

Table 3 presents comparisons of variables describing teacher characteristics.

Table 3. Teacher Characteristics from School Report Cards from 10 Highest and 10 Lowest Scoring Schools

School Name	Reading Score	Total Academic Index*	% of Classes Taught by Teachers Certified for Subject and Grade Level	% of Classes Taught by Teachers with a Major, Minor, or the Equivalent in the Subject Being Taught	% of Classes Taught by Teachers who Participated in Content-Focused Professional Development	% of Teachers with a Masters Degree or Greater or the Equivalent	Average Years of Teaching Experience	Percent of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch*
TEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WITH HIGHEST 4TH GRADE READING SCORES ON KCCT								
High-1	97.7	92.8	100%	100%	100%	81%	12	03.1%
High-2	97.1	72.3	100%	100%	100%	86%	15	34.5%
High-3	96.7	72.5	100%	100%	100%	86%	10	37.7%
High-4	96.0	94.4	100%	100%	100%	95%	16	12.6%
High-5	95.7	69.1	100%	100%	100%	83%	15	87.4%
High-6	95.6	83.8	100%	0 (probably data error)	100%	78%	10	64.1%
High-7	95.5	84.6	100%	100%	100%	35%	9	05.8%
High-8	95.5	83.7	100%	100%	100%	66%	8	14.5%
High-9	95.3	86.7	100%	100%	100%	84%	12	30.9%
High-10	95.1	79.0	100%	96%	97%	60%	15	55.6%
TEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WITH LOWEST 4TH GRADE READING SCORES ON KCCT								
Low-1	56.8	58.4	85%	85%	83%	64%	11	85.6%
Low-2	55.9	36.4	97%	97%	100%	71%	9	92.9%
Low-3	55.8	42.0	94%	94%	100%	65%	14	88.9%
Low-4	54.3	39.4	98%	98%	100%	51%	7	87.4%
Low-5	54.0	42.2	100%	100%	100%	81%	19	86.7%
Low-6	53.6	39.0	100%	100%	100%	76%	14	68.5%
Low-7	52.4	42.3	100%	100%	100%	89%	12	89.2%
Low-8	51.1	39.2	100%	75%	75%	100%	12	84.8%
Low-9	48.6	38.2	100%	100%	100%	65%	11	73.7%
Low-10	48.4	33.2	100%	100%	100%	77%	10	96.9%
State Averages	76.9		N/A	N/A	N/A	80%	13 yrs.	55%

The additional variables presented in Table 3 are descriptive information about classroom teachers from the Kentucky School Report Card.

Percent of Classes Taught by Teachers Certified for Subject and Grade Level: All schools in the 10 highest score category have 100% in this category; the range in for the 10 schools with the lowest scores is 85%-100%.

Percent of Classes Taught by Teachers with a Major, Minor, or the Equivalent in the Subject Being Taught: The data for the High-6 school is probably in error. The range of values for this variable in the 10 highest scoring schools is 96%-100%; the range for the 10 lowest scoring schools is 75%-100%.

Percent of Classes Taught by Teachers Who Participated in Content-Focused Professional Development: The range for this variable for the 10 highest scoring schools is 97%-100%; the range for the 10 lowest scoring schools is 75%-100%.

Percent of Teachers with a Masters Degree of Greater or the Equivalent: The range for the highest scoring schools is 35%-95%; the range for the 10 lowest scoring schools is 51%-100%.

Average Years of Teaching Experience: The mean is reported for this statistic without the number of teachers included. This statistic is very difficult to interpret and doesn't offer much information to the reader. A more interpretable statistic would be the median number of years. This would avoid statistical problems with extreme values in the calculating of a mean.

Table 4 presents summary statistics for Table 3

Table 4. Summary of Teacher Characteristics of 10 Highest Scoring and 10 Lowest Scoring Schools

School Group	Reading Score	Total Academic Index*	% of Classes Taught by Teachers Certified for Subject and Grade Level	% of Classes Taught by Teachers with a Major, Minor, or the Equivalent in the Subject Being Taught	% of Classes Taught by Teachers who Participated in Content-Focused Professional Development	% of Teachers with a Masters Degree or Greater or the Equivalent	Percent of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch*
	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median
10 Highest	95.65	83.75	100%	100%	100%	82%	32.6%
10 Lowest	53.8	39.1	100%	99%	100%	73.5%	87.05%

*Note: Information not included in School Report Card

There was no difference in the median values for the 10 highest scoring schools and the 10 lowest scoring schools on the variable "Percent of classes taught by teachers certified for subject and grade level." The median for both groups was 100%. The medians for the category, "Percent of classes taught by teachers with a major, minor, or the equivalent in the subject being taught," were slightly different. The median for the 10 highest scoring schools was 100%; the median for the 10 lowest scoring schools was 99%.

In the category, "Percent of classes taught by teachers who participated in content-focused professional development," the median for each group was 100%. There was a difference in the medians for the category, "Percent of teachers with a masters degree or greater or the equivalent." The median for the 10 highest scoring schools was 82%; the median for the 10 lowest scoring schools was 73.5%. It is not clear what is meant by "or equivalent" in the two categories using this wording.

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Table 4. Summary of Teacher Characteristics of 10 Highest Scoring and 10 Lowest Scoring Schools

School Group	Reading Score	Total Academic Index*	% of Classes Taught by Teachers Certified for Subject and Grade Level	% of Classes Taught by Teachers with a Major, Minor, or the Equivalent in the Subject Being Taught	% of Classes Taught by Teachers who Participated in Content-Focused Professional Development	% of Teachers with a Masters Degree or Greater or the Equivalent	Percent of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch*
	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median
10 Highest	95.65	83.75	100%	100%	100%	82%	32.6%
10 Lowest	53.8	39.1	100%	99%	100%	73.5%	87.05%

*Note: Information not included in School Report Card

There was no difference in the median values for the 10 highest scoring schools and the 10 lowest scoring schools on the variable "Percent of classes taught by teachers certified for subject and grade level." The median for both groups was 100%. The medians for the category, "Percent of classes taught by teachers with a major, minor, or the equivalent in the subject being taught," were slightly different. The median for the 10 highest scoring schools was 100%; the median for the 10 lowest scoring schools was 99%.

In the category, "Percent of classes taught by teachers who participated in content-focused professional development," the median for each group was 100%. There was a difference in the medians for the category, "Percent of teachers with a masters degree or greater or the equivalent." The median for the 10 highest scoring schools was 82%; the median for the 10 lowest scoring schools was 73.5%. It is not clear what is meant by "or equivalent" in the two categories using this wording.

Discussion

By including the Total Academic Index and the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch, some relationships "jump" from the data tables. The school coded as "High-5" has a Reading Score of 95.7 and is included in the "10 highest scoring schools." However, the Total Academic Index for this school was 69.1, further the CTBS/5 end of primary percentile was the 49th.

Other Academic Indices from this school's report card are: Science 81.6; Writing 74.9; Math 55.1; Social Studies 58.8; Arts and Humanities 26; and Practical Living and Vocational Studies 38.9. This school would not have been identified as having a high reading score if the sorting of schools had been done using any other Academic Index variable.

Swanson and Engert (1995) suggested ranking school data by the "top ten" and "bottom ten" on various indices as a way of looking at high and low achievement on variables of interest. This school's achievement on the Reading Index would have been overlooked by other analyses. The school also has 87.4% of students receiving free and reduced lunch, a variable that is related to school achievement in educational research (and has indications of a relationship in this exploratory study).

Achilles, Sharp, and Finn (1998, November) carefully delineate the difference between the variables "class size" and "pupil-teacher-ratio." They report that these variables are often mistakenly used interchangeably, a mistake that has led to negative reporting about class size. Class size, that is the number of students in a classroom with a teacher, has been shown through repeated research (see Achilles, 1999, October, for multiple citations). If the Kentucky

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Department of Education had chosen to report this statistic rather than the PTR, parents could better evaluate their child's school.

Reporting "average years of teaching experience" is also a useless statistic. The reader does not know whether this relates to only the classroom teachers or to the whole school staff. Further, reporting a mean without the "N" and realizing that the mean is subject to extreme values (for example one teacher who has been at the school for a long time would lead to a high mean). Reporting a median value and defining what is meant by "teacher" would be helpful.

The "teacher characteristics" variables are hard to interpret because it is not clear what is meant by "or the equivalent" added to a description of two of the variables. What is the equivalent of having a major or minor in a subject? What is the equivalent of a master's degree? Is the master's degree in the subject that the teacher is teaching? Many teachers have chosen to obtain masters degrees in counseling or education administration rather than in their subject areas. In some cases, these were the only master's degrees available.

Conclusions

The information that is presented in Kentucky's School Report Card is described by this study. The format is included in the Appendix of the paper. There were apparent differences in the medians of the 10 highest scoring schools and the 10 lowest scoring schools on the variables of school attendance rate, and CTBS/5 end of primary reading percentile.

Kentucky's School Report Card could be more informative if some of the variable measures were improved and explained. Nevertheless, The Heritage Foundation (2001) cites Kentucky's School Report Card as one of 10 "model report cards." Providing the information for each school on the Internet is certainly commendable. Hoxby (2001) used National Assessment

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of Educational Progress (NAEP) testing, which is designed to track achievement over time, to look at progress in states using school report cards. She listed Texas, Washington, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Connecticut, and Wisconsin as states that lead in the area of school report cards. Hoxby found that the annual rate of improvement in 9-year-olds' reading scores was significantly higher in states that reported state test scores on school report cards. The same significant difference in improvement was found for 13-year olds' mathematics scores. This is, of course, correlational research and there are surely intervening variables that would explain these gains. Nevertheless, this support for states making school data readily available is heartening. With some improvement and clarification of variable measurement and reporting, Kentucky's School Report Card data will also be a valuable source for educational researchers.

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APPENDIX

Kentucky School Report Card

Commonwealth Accountability Testing System

School Report Card

School Year

Name of School

Contact Person
Address
Phone Number
E-mail address

SAMPLE SCHOOL REPORT CARD

Dear Parents/Guardians:
This report card provides information about how well our school is doing, where it is succeeding, and where there is room for improvement. While it cannot tell everything about our performance, the report card is a good starting point for discussions with our teachers, administrators, school council members, and school board members. Unless noted, all data is from the 1999-2000 school year; contact information and narratives reflect the most recent school year's activity. For a more detailed examination of our school, please ask to see our Expanded Report Card, which contains a wealth of data and reports detailing school performance and procedures. Each school is required by law to provide this information upon request.

About Our School

Name of School and mission statement of the school. Overall description of location of school and student demographics.

How Our School Ensures Educational Equity

A statement written by the school personnel.

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School Enrollment __Number of Students Enrolled___

How Our Students Perform

Kentucky uses the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) to hold schools accountable for student progress. CATS has three parts: the Kentucky Core Content Tests, the national Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS/5), and other measures of the school's performance, including attendance, retention and dropout rates. Together these three elements make up a school's CATS Performance Score for every two-year period.

Kentucky Core Content Tests

These tests measure the ability of our students to use knowledge in each subject. Kentucky's tests rate student performance using four categories: Novice, Apprentice, Proficient, and Distinguished. These categories translate into a scale of 0-140, with 100 being considered proficient. The state goal for all schools is 100 by the year 2014. This chart compares our school's performance, including academic indices and the percent of our students scoring novice, apprentice, proficient and distinguished (P/D), with all the schools in our district and all the schools in Kentucky.

KCCT Test	Novice			Apprentice			Proficient/Distinguished			Academic Index		
	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
Reading (4th)	0%	0%	3%	29%	44%	65%	71%	56%	32%	96	88.6	76.9
Science (4th)	0%	3%	12%	69%	82%	82%	31%	15%	6%	82.2	69.2	56.9
Writing (4th)	4%	14%	30%	60%	47%	50%	35%	39%	20%	72	69.8	54.2
Mathematics (5th)	2%	7%	21%	12%	36%	54%	86%	58%	25%	122	97.4	67.1
Social Studies (5th)	2%	6%	20%	26%	60%	67%	72%	35%	13%	95.5	76.2	57.9
Arts & Humanities (5th)	5%	35%	65%	47%	49%	31%	49%	16%	5%	94.1	53.4	32.5
PI/VS (5th)	5%	17%	38%	58%	67%	55%	37%	16%	6%	79.2	60.1	45

The goal is that by 2014 nearly all students will score proficient or distinguished.

National Norm Referenced Test

The national norm referenced test used in Kentucky, the CTBS/5, measures the basic skills of our students while allowing us to compare their performance with national benchmarks established in 1996. These scores are reported in percentiles. A percentile shows the percentage of students who fell below a particular score on the test. For example, a percentile of 60 would show that the average student in our school scored equal to or better than 60 percent of all students who took the test. For data on student performance on the ACT, SAT, and advanced placement tests, ask to see our school's Expanded Report Card.

National Norm Referenced Test (CTBS/5)	School	District	State	Nation
End of Primary (EOP) Reading	74%ile	72%ile	55%ile	50%ile
EOP Language Arts	74%ile	65%ile	53%ile	50%ile
EOP Mathematics	76%ile	72%ile	55%ile	50%ile

Other Measures

Other measures of school performance are the degree to which our school succeeds in getting students to come to school, our dropout rate, and the degree to which our graduates successfully move on to higher education or jobs. Another measure is the retention rate, which reflects the percent of students who were not academically ready to go on to the next grade and had to repeat the content of a grade for another year. These data reflect our performance during the 1998-1999 school year.

	Attendance Rate	Retention Rate
School	96%	0.8%
District	95.4%	1.8%
State	93.9%	4%

Our CATS Performance

Starting in the year 2002, this space will contain a customized growth chart showing our school's academic improvement annually in relation to the goal of proficiency by the year 2014.

State Contest Results:

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Teacher Qualifications

This chart shows the level of content preparation, continuing education, and classroom experience of our teachers. These numbers do not include our administrators, guidance counselors, or library media specialists. The top row presents information on the certification of our teachers, while the second row presents additional information on the extent of their formal preparation to teach specific content. A teacher may be fully certified and yet not possess a formal major or minor in the subject they are teaching. The third row reflects the continuing efforts of our teachers to increase their mastery of the content areas they teach. The bottom two rows present further information about the extent of preparation and years of teacher experience

	Sch.	Dist.	State
% of Classes Taught by Teachers Certified for Subject and Grade Level	100%	99%	N/
% of Classes Taught by Teachers with a Major, Minor, or the Equivalent in the Subject Being Taught	100%	99%	N/
% of Classes Taught by Teachers Who Participated in Content-Focused Professional Development	100%	100%	N/
% of Teachers with a Masters Degree or Greater or the Equivalent	95%	82%	80%
Average Years of Teaching Experience	16	12	1

Our Learning Environment

School Safety

The information on school safety is intended to illustrate the policies and procedures we have in place to make our school as safe as possible for our students and staff.

	Yes	No
Visitors are Required to Sign in	X	
All Parents received the District Discipline Code	X	
% of Classrooms with Telephone Access to Outside Lines		0%

Procedures in Place in Our School for Drug and Weapons Detection

Information written by school.

Violation	Number of Reported Incidents	Number of Students Suspended or Expelled for This	Number of Students Transferred to Alternative Placement for This
Aggravated Assault (with intent to cause injury)	0	0	0
Drug Abuse Violations	0	0	0
Weapons Violations	0	0	0

Student Resources

	Spending per Student	Student Teacher Ratio	Student/Computer Ratio	% of Classrooms with at Least One KETS Workstation With Internet Access
Our School	5467	14:1	6.1:1	100
District	5218	18:1	6.4:1	100
State	6270	17:1	5.8:1	92

How We Use Technology to Teach

Description of how school uses technology in teaching.

Parental Involvement

	# of Students Whose Parent/Guardian Had at Least One Teacher Conference	# of Parents/ Guardians Voting in School council (SBDM) Elections	# of Parents/Guardians Serving on the School Council (SBDM) or Its Committees	# of Volunteer Hours
Our School	286	95	20	1200

Extracurricular Activities

Listed

Award and Recognitions

Listed

What We Are Doing To Improve

Written by school personnel.

How to Get More Information

Call, e-mail, fax or write to our principal at the number and address on the top of this School Report Card. You may contact your School Based Council Members at the numbers below. Visit our main office and ask for the Expanded School Report Card that contains a variety of information including Kentucky Core Content Test data and CTBS/5 national norm referenced test data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, disability and other criteria. This disaggregated data is available to you at no cost. The remainder of the Expanded School Report Card may be free or provided at cost of copying.

Member's Name	Phone	Member's Name	Phone
Listed	Listed		

Our school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability in employment or provision of services.

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